

Mitigation News

Reducing the Risks of Natural Disasters in Massachusetts

*Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)*



Important Date:

- Nov. 1, 2004—FEMA deadline for the completion of all hazard mitigation plans for municipalities & states to qualify for future Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding.

Inside this issue:

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program Funded for FY2004 2

Hazard Mitigation Success Story 2

Overview of Available Mitigation Grant Program 3

Internet Resources 3

Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 Update 4

Send suggestions, comments or concerns about this newsletter to Donna.K.Nelson@state.ma.us

Reducing Flood Risks as Boston's Muddy River Comes Clean

Since the fall of 1996, the Muddy River has flooded three times, causing damage to residents, businesses and institutions in Boston and Brookline. These events have brought together a diverse group of stakeholders including universities, museums, businesses, and residents working together with the City of Boston, Town of Brookline and the State of Massachusetts to restore the Muddy River. This river restoration is intended as a means of controlling area flooding, and as a step in implementing the Emerald Necklace Master Plan of landscape and historic resource treatments that seek to undo the effects of erosion, storm damage, and neglect over the years.

The [Muddy River Restoration Project](#) is Phase I of the 1999 Emerald Necklace Master Plan. Completed by Frederick Law

Olmsted in 1895, the 6 mile Emerald Necklace was the first linear park to be constructed in this country. This area is comprised of a series of parklands and vehicular parkways, which are linked by the wetland resources of the Muddy River, a tributary of the Charles River. The five major parts of the system include the Back Bay Fens, Muddy River Improvement, Jamaica Park, Arnold Arboretum and Franklin Park, and their connecting parkways (Fenway, Riverway, Jamaica Way and Arborway).

The first phase of the project was highlighted by federal, state and local agencies coming together to provide funding for engineering, design and project management of the project and ended with the actual physical dredging and improvements to the Charlesgate section of the project.

The partners in the project include the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), City of Boston, Town of Brookline, Boston Water and Sewer Commission and many residents.

(continued on page 4)



Flooding in the Fenway on Brookline Ave. along the Muddy River in 1996 along the Boston Fens area.

New DCR Commissioner Named; MEMA Director Steps Down

Katherine Abbott, an environmental conservationist and advocate for the Boston Harbor islands, has been selected as the first commissioner for the state's new Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The new DCR combines the former Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). Abbott has extensive experience in the

management of public lands and recreational facilities. She began her career with the state parks system in 1980. During her tenure at the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, she managed the first state-wide management-planning program for forest and park and streamlined land acquisition procedures that resulted in a more efficient use of state capital dollars.

Stephen J. McGrail left his position as Director of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) on January 2, 2004. McGrail was originally appointed to the position of MEMA Director by Governor Paul Cellucci in June 1999, serving in that position under the administration of Governor Jane Swift, as well.

(continued on page 2)

<i>Regional Planning Agency</i>	<i>Final Plan Due</i>
2002 funding	
Cape Cod Commission (CCC)	12/31/04
Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)	12/31/04
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)	12/31/04
Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)	12/31/04
2003 funding	
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)	7/31/05
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG)	7/31/05
Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC)	7/31/05

"The new culvert worked beautifully and conversations with long time abutters reinforced how important this project was to their neighborhood."

*Norwood General Manager
John J. Carroll*

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program Funding to Continue in FY2004

FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program funding of natural hazard mitigation plans is now entering its third year of funding. The PDM Program was authorized by §203 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Assistance and Emergency Relief Act (Stafford Act), 42 USC, as amended by §102 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. During FY2002, every state was awarded approximately \$353,000 in matching funds (75% federal, 25% local) to be used for the development of local and state hazard mitigation plans. In FY2003, every state was again awarded fund-

ing, this time for approximately \$223,000 in matching funds (75/25) to be used for either hazard mitigation plans and/or hazard mitigation projects. For FY2002, Massachusetts received \$400,195 and funded four regional planning agencies. In FY2003, Massachusetts received \$248,375 and was able to fund three more RPAs (see chart to left).

In addition to the individual grants to the states in FY2003, the PDM program funding also included a nationwide, competitive grant program. The requirements for this grant application

to FEMA national headquarters were very stringent and a very short time frame was given over this past summer. . Massachusetts submitted three applications – two project applications and one planning application for the Boston Metropolitan area through MAPC. As the grant requirements become available for the FY2004 PDM Grant program, the second year of this new program, the state will share this information with the RPAs. Additional information is also available on FEMA's website at www.fema.gov (do a search for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program).

Mitigation Success: Norwood Upgrades Culvert With HMGP Funds

From a Town of Norwood letter to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, dated Nov. 6, 2003:

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen and the residents of Norwood, I would like to express my gratitude to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for providing financial assistance to the Town of Norwood under the Hazard Mitigation Program.

The grant program enabled the Town to replace an undersized culvert that carried Traphole Brook under Sumner Street and was the cause of numerous flooding incidents. During rainfalls of moderate intensity, the brook would overburden the aging stone culvert, thereby causing nearby properties to be flooded. In one instance, the

brook washed out Sumner Street and closed the road for a period of time.



Before—Sumner St. culvert

The newly constructed culverts were recently put to the test, and passed with flying colors. On October 29th, nearly 2 inches of rain was recorded by a number of observers in the Norwood area. The former culvert would have reached its capacity almost instantaneously and flooding most likely would have occurred at 4 adjacent properties on Sumner Street and 7 properties upstream on

Union Street. The new culvert worked beautifully and conversations with long time abutters reinforced how important this project was to their neighborhood.

Once again, our sincerest gratitude for providing the opportunity to participate in such a worthwhile program and for making the quality of life better for many people.

Very truly yours,
John J. Carroll
Norwood General Manager



After - New twin box culverts

New Leadership at DCR and MEMA

(continued from page 1)

Mr. McGrail served as the State Coordinating Officer for four Presidential Disasters and seven State Declared Disasters. Christine

McCombs has been appointed MEMA Acting Director by Governor Romney as of Jan. 5, 2004. Ms. McCombs has been with MEMA's Disaster Recovery

Manager since 1991 and has been responsible for overseeing the states public assistance and hazard mitigation programs for 13 years.

Overview of the Grant Programs Administered by MEMA & DCR

MEMA and DCR jointly administer the following three Federal hazard mitigation grant programs of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Established pursuant to Section 404 of the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Relief Act (P.L. 100-707), as amended, this program provides matching grants (75% Federal, 25% non-Federal) for FEMA-approved hazard mitigation projects following a Presidential disaster declaration. Massachusetts places a priority on hazard mitigation measures such as the acquisition of damaged structures to turn the land over to a community for open space, relocating damaged or flood prone structures out of a high hazard area, retrofitting properties to resist the damaging effects of natural disasters, and other non-structural solutions.

Applications for funding are submitted for review by Massachusetts' Hazard Mitigation Committee with final approval given by the Director of MEMA, the Commissioner of DCR, and the FEMA Region I office. The most recent declared disaster was March 2001. Applications for this and all previous disasters are closed at this time. Under the new rules recently issued to implement the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-390), beginning with disasters declared on or after November 1, 2004, applicants must have an adopted multi-hazard mitigation plan in place, which has been approved by FEMA, in order to be eligible for H M G P f u n d i n g .

Flood Hazard Mitigation (FMA) Program Authorized by the National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-325), the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program makes cost-shared grants (75% Federal,

25% non-Federal) available to communities that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Grants are available on an annual basis for flood mitigation planning or projects. Eligible projects include property acquisition, relocation of flood-prone structures, retrofitting of existing flood prone structures, minor physical flood mitigation projects, and dune replenishment through planting of native dune vegetation and/or the installation of sand fencing. The recommended mitigation activity must address repetitive flood loss properties and be contained in a flood mitigation plan adopted by the community, reviewed by the state, and approved by FEMA.

The annual application process is held when grant funds are made available by FEMA.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) See previous section on updates to this program.



Coastal flooding in Scituate, March 2001



Example of an elevation project to move a Scituate residence above the floodplain, reducing future flood damage.

Surfing Around: Mitigation Planning Resources on the Internet

www.waterstewards.org

The Water Stewards Network has launched a new web site with the aim of becoming a planet-wide "central nervous system" for water literacy and stewardship. Network organizers hope to galvanize support for the movement for water sovereignty and promote a paradigm shift in the global approach to water management.

<http://www.mmm.ucar.edu/uswrp/programs/thorpex.html>

General information about THORPEX: A Global Atmospheric Research Program, created to accelerate improvements in the accuracy of 1-to-14-day weather forecasts for the benefit of society and the economy, is presented on this web site.

<http://www.cshs-us.org>

The Center for State Homeland Security is a unique national resource dedicated to help state and local governments carry out their role in homeland security while supporting the evolution of a national strategy across all levels of government and the private sector. The web site is sponsored by the National Emergency Management Association, the Adjutants General Association of the United States, and Mitretek Systems.

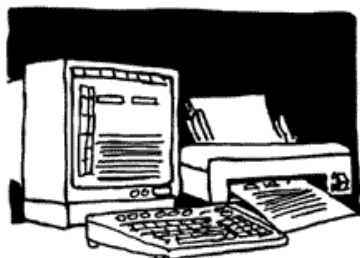
<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/ncflood>

This web site profiles examples of future National Weather Service (NWS) forecast products that will enable communities to better prepare for floods. They

are the result of a NWS project to develop effective ways to display flood forecast information disseminated by the service in a graphical, easy-to-read format that will enable emergency managers and disaster planners to prepare better.

<http://www.weatherclassroom.com>

The Weather Channel has recently unveiled a web site, Weatherclassroom.com, to serve as a resource for educators, students, and parents. The site offers a comprehensive collection of interactive weather-related content and educational tools, including lesson plans for educators, an interactive weather forecast for students, and a weather word glossary and storm encyclopedia for parents.



MA Mitigation Fact:
More than \$17 million has been allocated in HMGP and FMA grants in Massachusetts for local hazard mitigation projects and plans since 1996.

Mitt Romney, Governor
Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor
Ellen Roy Herzfelder, EOEIA Secretary
Edward A. Flynn, EOPS Secretary



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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.STATE.MA.US/DEM/
PROGRAMS/MITIGATE/INDEX.HTM
WWW.STATE.MA.US/MEMA

Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 Update

FEMA originally published its interim final rule in February 2002 on the implementation of Section 322 (hazard mitigation planning) under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2000), Public Law 106-390. A change to this rule was published on Oct. 1, 2002 which extended the date that the DMA 2000 planning requirements take effect. This updated rule stated that federal disasters declared on or after Nov. 1, 2004, State Mitigation Plans will be required in order to receive non-emergency federal disaster assistance, and local mitigation plans will be required in order to receive future Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grants. In addition, for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program funding after FY2004, local governments must have an approved mitigation plan in order to receive a project grant under the PDM program. For more information on this update, see the Federal Register at <http://www.access.gpo.gov>.

State Hazard Mitigation Plan in Process of FY2004 Update

The State Hazard Mitigation Team is in the process of updating its State Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to update this plan to meet the DMA 2000 deadline of Nov. 1, 2004. In 2002, the state contracted with the Dewberry Companies to update and develop statewide maps of natural hazards and high risk areas. The resulting maps and research are currently being edited and a final report will be finished shortly. This information will be sent to all seven of the RPAs currently working on hazard mitigation plans as well as the remaining RPAs planning to become involved in mitigation planning.

Muddy River Comes Clean in Restoration Project

(continued from page 1)

The dredging resulted in an improved, higher capacity channel from the Charles River to the Richardson Bridge that completes the first stage of improved flood control, aquatic habitat and water quality for the Muddy River project through the removal of built-up and contaminated sediments.

Over 3,000 cubic yards of material was dredged and disposed of off site. 1500 feet of the channel was dredged between Storrow Drive and Boylston Street. The many pieces of debris removed from the river filled numerous hauling containers and 600 feet of conduit under Storrow Drive was inspected and cleaned out by divers. The banks of the river were enhanced and stabilized through the planting of over 800 shrubs.

Federal funding for the project was made available after the 1996 and 1998 Presidential Disaster Declarations, through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and HUD's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Initiative. FEMA provided \$2.2 million in funding and HUD awarded just over \$2.5 million. MEMA, DCR and DHCD provided the required grant and project management of the funds and worked with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Northeastern University and the Town of Brookline to ensure the project's completion. It has been a very successful first step in an important project that will reduce future property damages from flooding and preserve an historical landmark.



Photos courtesy of Camp, Dresser and McKee.



3. Photos of the Charlesgate area in Boston's Back Bay area where dredging for the Muddy River Restoration Project has taken place. (1) Before the dredging; (2) & (3) during the dredging; (4) after the dredging.